

# *Sondag Oggend se Kerk Kak*

written and illustrated by  
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fig 1: craig steyn, close-ups page 11 & 12 (2024)

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE



**SONDAG OGGEND SE KERK KAK**  
CRAIG STEYN  
**2024**



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# introduction

Being a political office bearer, I receive many petitions in my inbox daily. One petition sparked a bigger than normal interest in me, a petition regarding the removal of an obelisk in the courtyard of the NG church. Being someone that had knowledge of the origins of this monolithic structure, I responded to the petition and shared this knowledge. What soon became apparent was that the removal of this structure was causing tension between the members of the church. I found this interesting, since the obelisk was a contradiction to the strict Calvinistic beliefs the NG Church as well as Afrikanerdom prided itself in upholding. This set me on a journey to reveal this contradiction in the ever-changing landscape that has become Afrikaner culture, specifically looking at the role of the Afrikaner male and masculinity. Needless to say, my response to the petition soon found its way to the local newspaper and put me at the center of this controversy, which inspired a somewhat more controversial take on this matter in my work, Sondag Oggend se Kerk Kak.



fig 3: craig steyn, page 12 (2024)

# the research

The Afrikaner identity has been historically rooted in Calvinist Christianity based on the “chosen people” myth. This myth has been the dominant force in shaping the social and cultural behaviour of the Afrikaner community for a long time. The basis of this identity is the belief of being divinely chosen according to their biblical interpretation, which also supports their perceived ideals of societal dominance (Toit 1983:920) . Due to socio-political changes and cultural influences this idea has slowly begun to erode, revealing a more intricate Afrikaner male identity. Early commentators on the Afrikaner culture, Anton Kannemeyer and Conrad Botes explored, critiqued and questioned many of these tropes and cultural norms of their post-apartheid time, when they had more freedom of speech. The medium they used was sequential art, released under the name, Bitterkomix (“As I Please” 2019). My work is a continuation of this medium, again focused on the multifaceted identity of the Afrikaner, more specifically, the Male.

Using black and white sequential art, I explore themes of otherness, abjection and transformation by giving it visual form. The choice of art style allows the viewer to focus on the finer details in my work and brings a sense of seriousness to it. Through a comic book format, I can tell a more personal story that will resonate easier with my target audience, this format also allows for a deeper exploration of Afrikaner masculinity as it allows for a story to unfold which explores the complexities of this shifting identity. The Afrikaner male, who found his identity in the stoic Calvinist archetype has been evolving into something more conflicted and ambiguous. I explore this shift through horror motifs inspired by the Lovecraftian mythos who is known for his exploration of the monstrous unknown (“Lovecraftian Horror | The H.P. Lovecraft Wiki | Fandom” n.d.). These motifs assist in highlighting the internal and external conflicts of the shifting identity that stays in a position of flux, where the familiar is suddenly alien and the body itself becomes a site of horror and transformation (Vosloo 2017:17).

My sequential art flows from what I term the “anchor image” or “anchor page” in which the theory of otherness can be seen clearly. The anchor page, page 11, shows the protagonist, Pieter, undergoing a fast and grotesque metamorphosis portraying both the literal and symbolic demonisation of the Afrikaner who decides stray from the preordained, divine identity. This change can be compared to the body horror portrayed in Niel Blomkamp’s movie, District 9. In District 9, the protagonist, Wikus, undergoes a transformation from being human to becoming an alien. Blomkamp’s work comments further on themes of otherness and posthuman transformation, using the monster body as a metaphor to highlight societal fears and prejudices towards the other (De Jager 2019:90). This reference assists in reflecting on how Afrikaner men view breaking from the norm as a serious and even disgusting danger to their sense of self.

To understand the impact of this transformation better it is very important to understand theorist and philosopher Julia Kristeva’s concept of abjection. In Kristeva’s idea of abjection, aspects of the self are rejected or expelled in disgust, this idea explains the anxieties surrounding identity shifts within Afrikaner masculinity (Kristeva 1982) The Afrikaner male is still perceived as a threat to the divine election myth as soon as they step out of the Calvinist morality sphere by the rest of their community, who still vehemently clings to these traditional values and cultural tropes (Claasen:2024). This sense of othering can lead to an internalised self-loathing due to the Afrikaner male becoming alienated from his community and himself. I entitled the page that deals with this metamorphosis, “Transfiguration”. The ambiguity reflects the fact that something divine and enlightening is taking place by way of letting go of those traditions, all while the Afrikaner male onlookers believe there is a loss of the divine in these actions. The monstrous transformation challenges not only the onlookers but also the protagonist himself. This narrative also acts as commentary on the persistence of damaging stereotypes with Afrikaner masculinity. According to du Toit (1983) the idea of the divinely chosen figurehead is still deeply entrenched in the Afrikaner male and continues to influence his societal behavior and expectations. These stereotypes add to the resistance against change while fostering a fear of the other that can manifest as hostility towards the Afrikaner male who does not conform. These dynamics might not be so visible in larger urban areas, but are more prevalent in smaller, more insular communities, where they are usually amplified, thus the reason my work on this highlight the small town of Robertson. In small towns like Robertson, deviations from this norm are usually dealt with swiftly and rather severe, with long lasting social repercussions.

The obelisk, which is also a recurring motif, present on page one and fifteen in the churchyard, represents the contradiction between what the Afrikaner selectively decides is divine and what isn’t. It stands as a symbol to the changing identity of the Afrikaner male, due to its ambiguous meaning challenging the traditional Calvinist beliefs. Currently it’s a grave marker, but it also serves as the weight of inherited beliefs and the contradictions in the Afrikaner identity. The obelisk, which was traditionally an idol, subverts the notion of divine selection that is central to the concept of the traditional Afrikaner. This is suggestive of the possibility that the Afrikaner masculinity is not only built on traditional Calvinist beliefs but also on cultural and traditional constructs. This idol shows how traditional Calvinist beliefs were steadily eroded by Masonic influences and adopted by the Afrikaner as a norm which could have damaged the integrity of the divine election myth.

Despite this strong belief in divine election that is central to Afrikaner masculinity, the erosion of Calvinist beliefs is quite evident. The conservative Afrikaner is steadily shifting to an identity lead by cultural Christianity, where religious beliefs are merely practiced as a cultural tradition rather than a strict doctrine (<https://www.vryeweekblad.com/authors/max-du-preez-2> n.d.). It can be argued that this change has diluted the traditional Afrikaner archetype, as younger generations are more inclined to question and reinterpret their cultural heritage.

# INFLUENCES

KRISTEVA  
BLOMKAMP  
BITTERKOMIX

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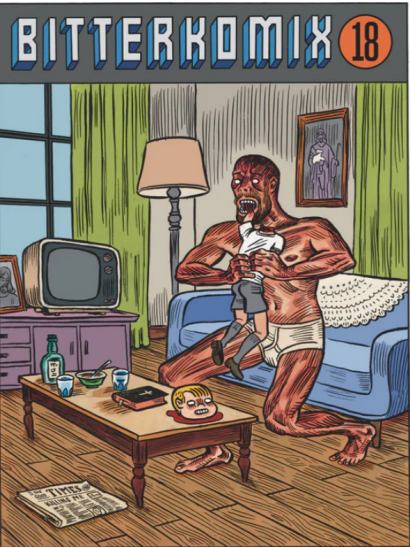


fig 4: conrad botes, BITTERKOMIX front cover (2020)

## ANTON KANNEMEYER & CONRAD BOTES

They did it first. through the use of satire and shocking imagery, Kannemeyer and Botes effectivley use satire to comment on and critique the conser-vative Afrikaner and the culture they represent.

The calling card of a generation, which could easily have been the Rodriguez<sup>1</sup> of the 90's. According to Botes, Bittercomix is often au-tobiographical without saying anything specific, it's up to the reader to decide what they make of it (Brodie 2013).

According Kannemeyer, post '94 people thought that they wouldn't have anymore content to write about. Kannemeyer responded and said, the struggle continues for them, talking about topics other white people wont (Brodie 2013)

<sup>1</sup> Rodriguez was an American born singer who found fame in the early 70's in South Africa be-cause of his controversial lyrics ( <https://www.vryeweekblad.com/en/opinions-and-debate/2023-08-11-rodriguez-and-the-south-african-vietnam/> )

## JULIA KRISTEVA'S POWERS OF HORROR

I have always been interested in writing and illustrating horror, but more specificaly, the abject. According to Kristeva, the abject comes from a repression of primal, pre-linguistic stage, where we wrestle with the bound-aries of our bodies and seperation from the maternal. this creates feeling of disgust and horror as we are drawn to, but also repulsed by the abject (Kristeva 1984).

We are made aware of the abject through bodily fluids, corpses and transgressive behaviour. These things sgnify the breakdown between ourselves and the other, the clean and the unclean, human and animal. As a scociety, we attempt to manage and control the abject through rituals and cultural practices, however, the threat of it resurfacing is always there (Kristeva 1984).

## POWERS OF HORROR



*An Essay on Abjection*

JULIA KRISTEVA

fig 5: unknown, front cover, (2020)



fig 6: unknown, District 9 promotional poster, (2009)

## NIEL BLOMKAMP'S DISTRICT 9

In Blomkamp's movie *District 9*, the viewer is taken through various stages of experiencing abjection, until the self transforms into the other.

In the movie, the aliens being the representation of the abject, are seperated from the rest of scociety, being objects of fear and disgust. They're subjected to discrimination and violence while being supressed by a ruling class.

The aliens or rather "Prawns"<sup>1</sup> are the *other*. In my work, the *other* becomes the representa-tionon a group of people whop go against the status quo and disrupt the cultural norms that the Afrikaaner has adopted to set them apart from the rest of civilisation (de Jager: 2019)

<sup>1</sup> The slang name given to the aliens

# METHODOLOGY

I employ a very traditional method of creating sequential art when it comes to the illustration however, the story develops in a more intuitive method.

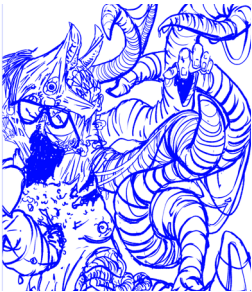
## HOW I WRITE IT



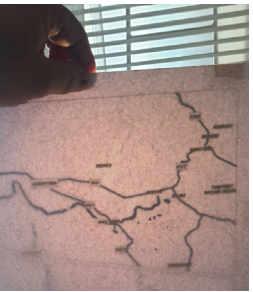
fig 7: craig steyn, page 11 (2024)

My writing evolves from what I have termed the **Anchor Image**. The anchor image is my initial thought and usually the most visually impactful image. This page can occur anywhere in the graphic novel. The story will then evolve up until this point and then further, it might start here or it might end here. I put a lot of energy in this page, because while I'm drawing it, I'm writing the rest of the story asking questions like:  
How did we get here?  
who is this?  
what's happening?  
what's going to happen?  
how does this represent my research?  
and so on...

## traditional method of illustrating



pages are first drawn digitally because it's easier to make changes and to experiment with the layout



The image is then either transferred onto the paper I'm working with via a lightbox or I will work directly over the printed blue lines and remove it via photoshop later.



fig 8: craig steyn, close-up page 1 (2024)

The final step involves adding the text via phototshop.

During this phase, colour corrections and minor page cleanups are done. I make every effort to keep the final graphic novel page the same as the traditional art page. In some cases though, I need to make bigger corrections.

PAGE 1: SETTING THE SCENE

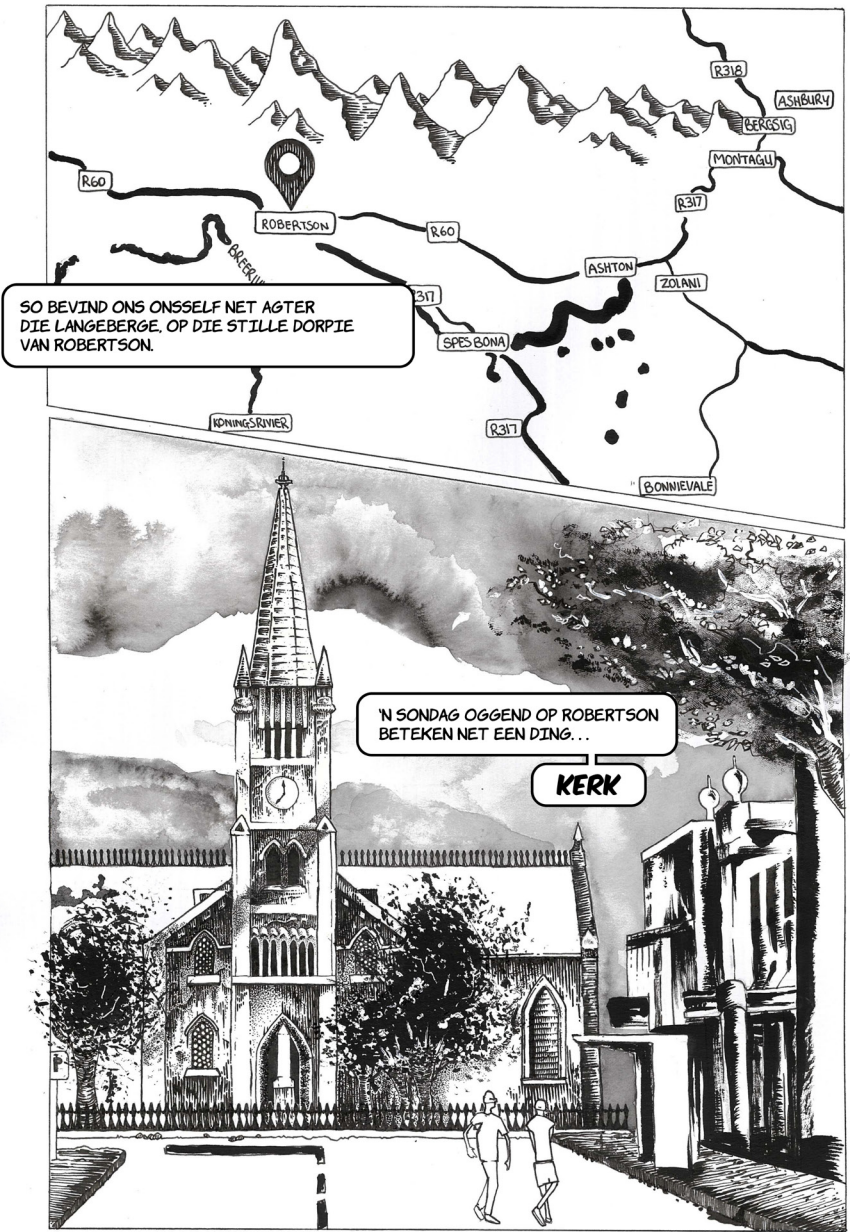


fig 9: craig steyn, page 1, (2024)

The opening page setting the scene

The story is specifically tied to Ng Church in Robertson and will be explained further on, along with a newspaper article that relates to the story.

It is important to note the obelisk in-front of the door way. This is a pivotal item relating to this story.

PAGE 2: THE VAN DER MERWES HOME



fig 10: craig steyn, page 2, (2024)

Further setting the scene and the atmosphere of the town.

Introducing the reader to the van Der Merwe family.

PAGE 3: THE VAN DER MERWE'S



fig 11: craig steyn, page 3 (2024)

Getting to know the family better and giving the reader a sense of their character.

Important to note are the conventional items on the wall.

The last frame shows an extreme, with the family having a framed image of the Afrikaaner monument hanging on their wall. This is to push the satire of the devoted Afrikaaner a bit further.

PAGE 4: THE DROP



fig 12: craig steyn, page 4 (2024)

Introducing the reader to the father, while expanding on the overall story

This is a more significant page and it's contents will be explained later.

PAGE 5: TAAL GEBRUIK



fig 13: craig steyn, page 5 (2024)

Revealing the mothers hypocrisy. She calls out the use of english instead of the use of bad language.

PAGE 6 : OFF TO CHURCH



fig 14: craig steyn, page 6 (2024)

The van der Merwe's are off to church in their fortuner.

The Fortuner has become somewhat of a cultural trope in Robertson. This panel further emphasises the traditional Afrikaners need to fit into what is deemed the norm.

PAGE 7: SUNDAY MORNING MESSAGE

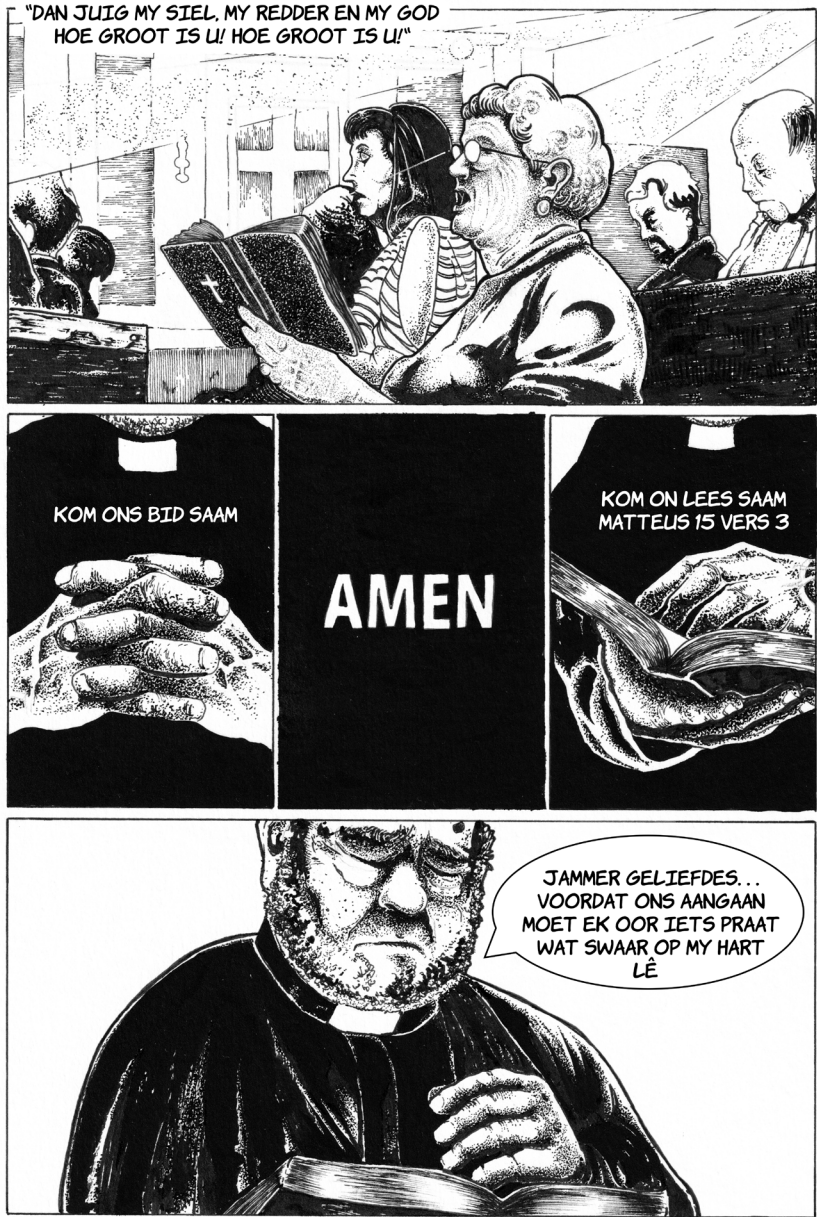


fig 15: craig steyn, page 7 (2024)

Dominie delivers his message, but is about to reveal something far more serious

In the fourth panel a bible verse is referred to. This bible verse relates to the keeping of traditions that contradict the word of God, yet the Dominie, is still preaching a message that contradicts that in favour of what the Afrikaaner has deemed "traditional".

PAGE 8: JUDGEMENT



fig 16: craig steyn, page 8 (2024)

After his big reveal he starts accusing certain members of the congregation.

**PAGE 9: THE ACCUSED**

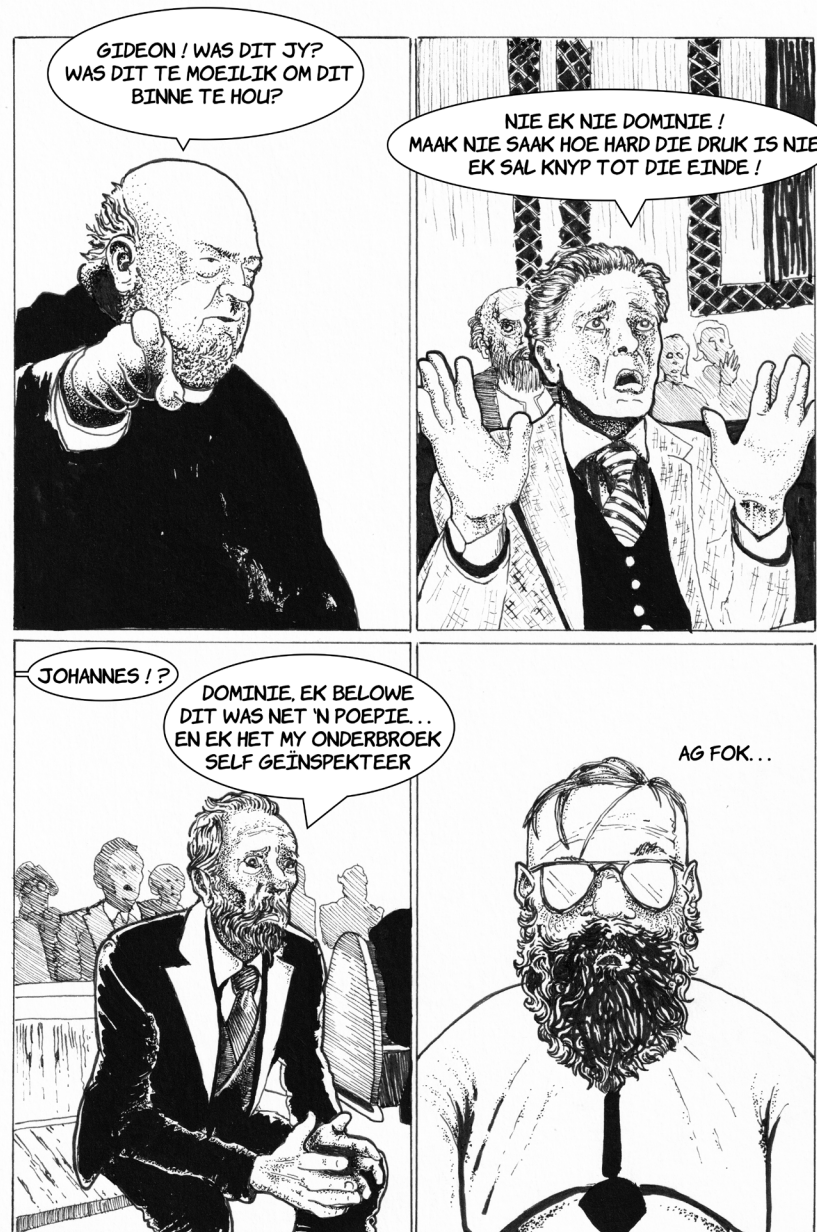


fig 17: craig steyn, page 9 (2024)

Dominie starts calling out random members of the church. They defend themselves against these accusations

In the last panel, Pieter realises that eventually he will also be called out, knowing he is the guilty person.

**PAGE 10: CONFESSIONS**



fig 18: craig steyn, page 10 (2024)

Pieter confesses and explains that since the incident he feels different. When Pieter used the toilet on page 3, he represented the metaphorical release of damaging traditions and cultural tropes that are damaging to the Afrikaaner male



fig 19: craig steyn, page 11 (2024)

PAGE 11: THE TRANSFIGURATION



fig 20: craig steyn, page 12 (2024)

PAGE 12: DIE ENGELSE DEMOON

PAGE 13: THE ATTACK



fig 21: craig steyn, page 14 (2024)

The metaphorical english demon is starts attacking the other church going members. It's purpose is to squeeze the pheaces out of the other men.

The pheaces is a metaphor for the traditions and cultural tropes the Afrikaaner male holds onto as part of his Afrikaaner masculine identity.

PAGE 14: THE STUBBORN RESULT

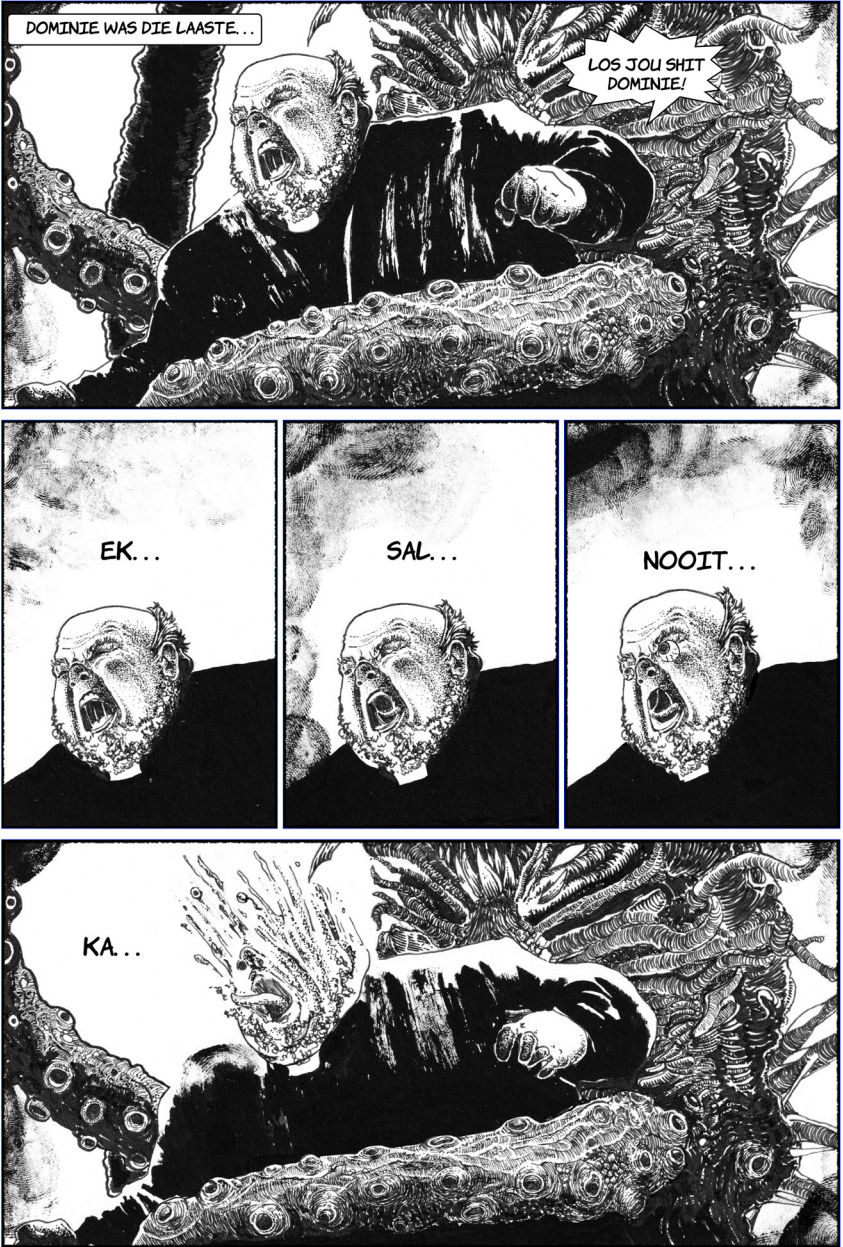


fig 22: craig steyn, page 13 (2024)

The “dominie”, in this sense, the custodian of the Afrikaaner tropes and traditions as they relate to the “chosen people” myth, is the last to face the english demon.

His resistance to letting go ends in a more fatal manner than the males that eventually gave in.

The pressure that builds up as a result of resisting the change eventually becomes fatal and serves as a metaphor for resistance.

PAGE 15: CHURCH IS OUT

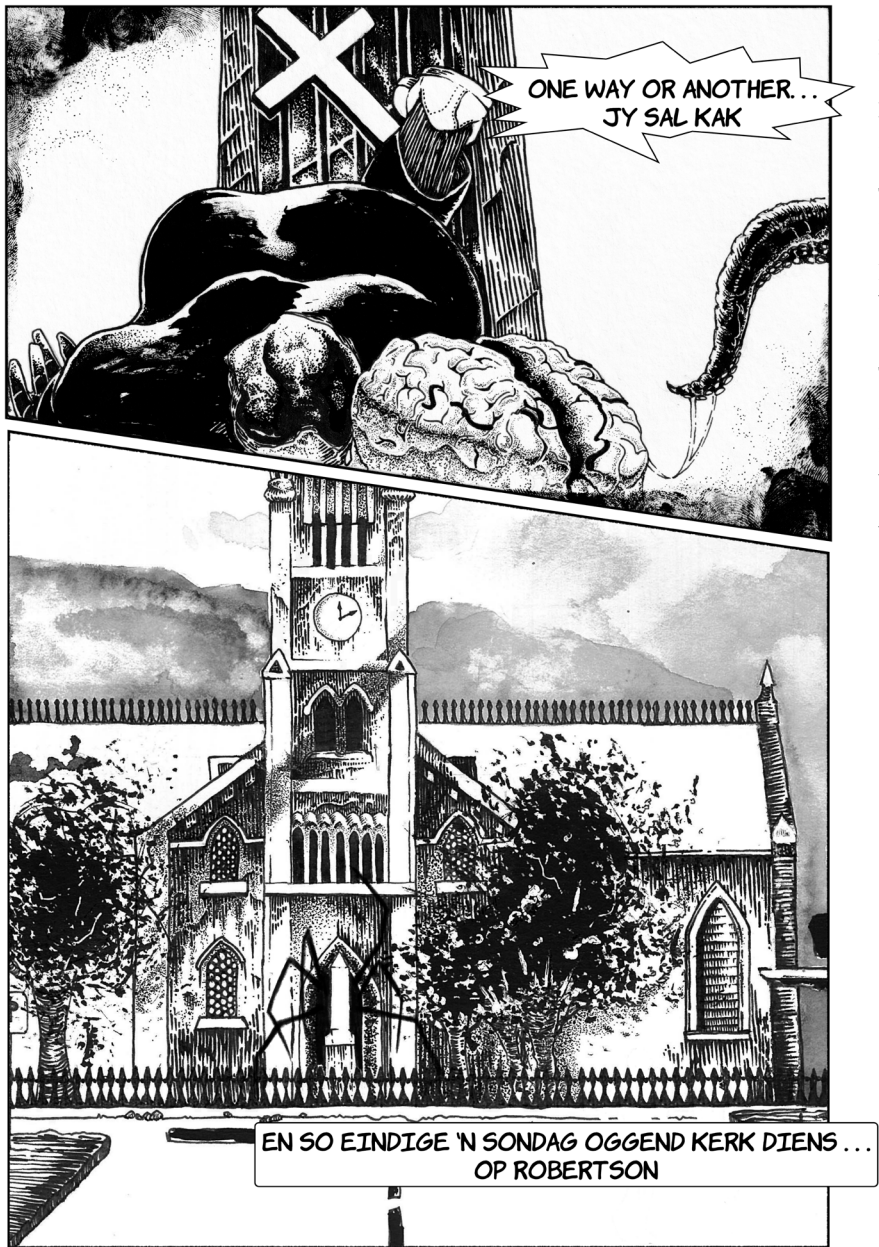


fig 23: craig steyn, page 15 (2024)

Dominie has lost his mind. This panel serves as a metaphor to open mindedness and letting go of the traditions and cultural tropes that can be harmful and damaging.

The lower panel shows the english demon moving out more the door. More specifically hilighting the obelisk, which was the starting point for this art work.

The obelisk, at the time of this art work has become a point of contention in the Robertson NG Church. One half of the church wants to keep it, regardless of it's contradictory symbolism, while the other half wants it removed.

Enrico Claassen

ROBERTSON – Die obelisk wat oor die Van der Merwe-gedenksteen voor die NG Moederkerk troon, is glo “seksueel offensief”.

Die gedenksteen gaan dus om dié rede verskuif word waarna die obelisk verwyder gaan word.

Ds. Janlu Kuyler, leraar van die NG Moederkerk, wou nie veel uitbrei oor die redes agter die verskuiwing nie.

Kuyler sê: “Die kerkraad van Robertson Moedergemeente bevestig dat ons ’n besluit geneem het om die gedenksteen te verskuif.

“Ons het ’n deursigtige proses binne die kerkraad, die gemeente en die Van der Merwe-familie gevolg. Ons het geen verdere kommentaar te lewer nie.”

’n Petisie wat die verskuiwing van die gedenksteen en verwydering van die obelisk teenstaan, het teen Dinsdag reeds talle name bevat.

Dianne Coetzee, ’n jare lange lidmaat van die kerk wat ook gekant is teen die verskuiwing van die gedenksteen, het verlede week hieroor na *Standard Breederivier Gazette* uitgereik.

“Die gedenksteen met die obelisk staan nou al 96 jaar voor die kerk. Oor die dekades heen het niemand nog die obelisk bo-op die gedenksteen as seksueel offensief beskou nie.

“Op die kerkterrein is predikante begrawe met grafstene wat obelisks op het. Hulle kan dan mos sommer die hele begraafplaas afbreek.”

Volgens Coetzee word beweer die obelisk “hou mense uit die kerk”.

“Dis onsin. Die kerk is al die jare nog stampvol. Dink net hoeveel mense hulle sal kan kos gee met die geld wat hulle wil gebruik om die gedenksteen te skuif.”

Mike Lacroix, ’n inwoner wat ook gekant is teen die verskuiwing, sê dit is belaglik dat die obelisk as seksueel offensief beskou word.

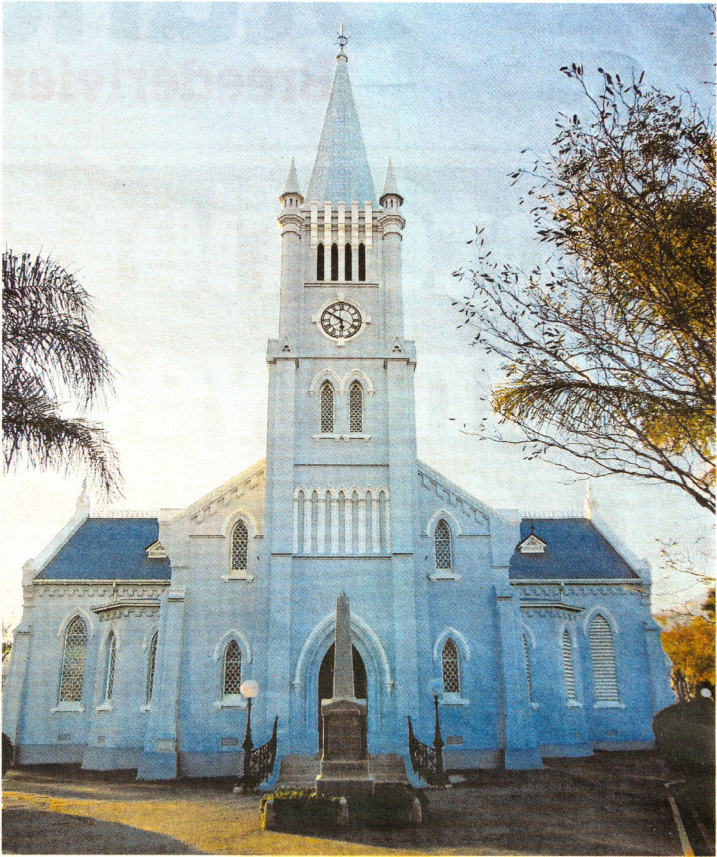
“Dis malligheid. Ek kan nie dink dat mense so kleinsielig is dat hulle so iets in ’n gedenksteen raaksien nie. As dit is soos hulle dink, moet hulle al wat graf en kerkoring met obelisks is, ook tot niet maak.”

Zack Julies, outeur van die petisie, sê by navraag: “Ek dink die redenasië agter die verskuiwing van die Van der Merwe-gedenksteen is beide belaglik en gevaarlik.

“Die dorp se geskiedenis word geskend om die politieke ideologie van ’n paar mense te pas wat ironies genoeg vandag baat vind by ds. H.P. van der Merwe se harde werk en nalatenskap. “Ons moet waninlingting in alle vorme bekamp en ons erfenis beskerm.”

Die raadslid Craig Steyn van die Langeberg-munisipaliteit verduidelik in ’n brief aan Coetzee: “Die obelisk het ’n lang geskiedenis wat nie van sy simboliese betekenis geskei kan word nie.

“Sy oorsprong in antieke Egipte is diep



Groot onmin heers in Robertson oor die moontlike verwydering van die obelisk voor die NG kerk.

gekoppel aan die songod Ra, en dit is beskou as ’n kanaal tussen die hemel en die aarde, wat goddelike krag en ewige lewe beliggaam.

“Die obelisk het egter ook ’n ander laag simboliek wat verband hou met vrugbaarheid en veral manlike generatiewe krag. Hierdie falliese simboliek was ’n hoeksteen van die interpretasie daarvan in beide antieke en moderne kontekste. Om bloot te stel dat dit gebou is vir sy argitektoniese styl volgens die tydperk, is skaars akkuraat.

“Jy kan dit nie van sy aangehegte simboliek skei nie – stap verby ’n swastika en sê vir jouself dit is bloot vir versiering.

“Ek sou ook nie wou hê dat hierdie struktuur weens die aard van die struktuur op enige van my troufoto's moet wees nie.”

Luidens die brief het die Vrymesselaars lank reeds die obelisk as simbool in sy argitektoniese en filosofiese tradisies gebruik. Die obelisk se Vrymes-selaarssimboliek weerspieël dikwels idees

van verligting, kennis en die strewe na morele en geestelike verheffing.

Dit dra egter ook by om sy ouer, meer antieke betekenis te dra, insluitend sy voorstelling van manlike krag en vrugbaarheid. Hierdie gelaagde betekenis maak dit ’n komplekse simbool in enige konteks.

Dit is belangrik om die obelisk se komplekse rol binne die Christendom te oorweeg. Terwyl vroeë Christene in die Romeinse Ryk obeliske aangeneem het en hulle herbruik het om hul heerskappy oor heidendom te demonstreer, het die struktuur nooit sy heidense wortels ten volle afgeskud nie. Keiser Konstantyn het byvoorbeeld verskeie obeliske van Egipte na Rome geneem as deel van sy kersteningspogings, maar hierdie monumente het steeds hul assosiasies met die Egiptiese heidendom gedra. Die obelisk se dubbele rol as ’n simbool van mag en ’n falliese simbool gekoppel aan vrugbaarheid en manlike oorheersing bly in stryd met die Christelike leerstelling, wat heidense afgodery verwerp.”

fig 24: Enrico Claassen, Langeberg Gazette (2024)



# l i s t o f f i g u r e s

- Cover art: Steyn C, micron with digital colour printed on Bristol board, 201 x 297mm (2024)
- fig 1: Steyn C, *close-ups page 11 & 12* (2024)
- fig 2: Steyn C, *close-up page 11* (2024)
- fig 3: Steyn C, , microns and acrylic ink on Bristol board, 297 x 420 mm (2024)
- fig 4: Botes C, *BITTERKOMIX 18 front cover*, 11 colour screenprint on 100% archival paper 250 gsm 560 x 760 mm (2020)
- fig 5: unknown, *front cover*, (2020)
- fig 6: unknown, *District 9 promotional poster*, (2009)
- fig 7: Steyn C, *Page 11*, microns and acrylic ink on Bristol board, 297 x 420 mm 250gsm (2024)
- fig 8: Steyn C, *close-up page 1* (2024)
- fig 9: Steyn C, *Page 1*, micron and acrylic ink on Bristol board, 201 x 297mm (2024)
- fig 10: Steyn C, *Page 2*, micron and acrylic ink on Bristol board, 201 x 297mm (2024)
- fig 11: Steyn C, *Page 3*, micron and acrylic ink on Bristol board, 201 x 297mm (2024)
- fig 12: Steyn C, *Page 4*, micron and acrylic ink on Bristol board, 201 x 297mm (2024)
- fig 13: Steyn C, *Page 5*, micron and acrylic ink on Bristol board, 201 x 297mm (2024)
- fig 14: Steyn C, *Page 6*, micron and acrylic ink on Bristol board, 201 x 297mm (2024)
- fig 15: Steyn C, *Page 7*, micron and acrylic ink on Bristol board, 201 x 297mm (2024)
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- fig 18: Steyn C, *Page 10*, micron and acrylic ink on Bristol board, 201 x 297mm (2024)
- fig 20: Steyn C, *Page 12*, micron and acrylic ink on Bristol board, 201 x 297mm (2024)
- fig 19: Steyn C, *Page 11*, micron and acrylic ink on Bristol board, 297 x 420 mm (2024)
- fig 21: Steyn C, *Page 14*, micron and acrylic ink on Bristol board, 297 x 420 mm (2024)
- fig 22: Steyn C, *Page 13*, micron and acrylic ink on Bristol board, 201 x 297mm (2024)
- fig 23: Steyn C, *Page 15*, micron and acrylic ink on Bristol board, 201 x 297mm (2024)
- fig 24: Enrico Claasen, *Langeberg Gazzette*, scan (2024)



# b i b l i o g r a p h y

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# CIRRICULUM VITAE

## CRAIG STEYN

BORN 1983

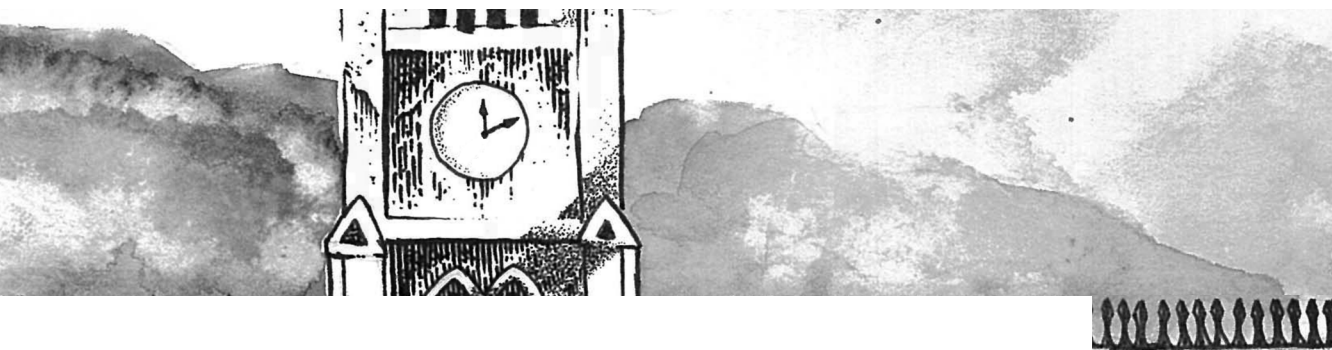
## PROFESSIONAL WORK

MODERN AMERICAN LOVECRAFT : ISBN 979-8848830187  
published by Paranoid American 2022

CRUMBS #1: ISBN 979-8395130778  
alternative cover and concept artist for graphic novel  
publication date 2023

## EXHIBITIONS

“REVE(!)ATION” UNISA 3rd year graduate exhibition  
ArtB Gallery Belville 2024



# biography

South African born artist, Craig Steyn, also known as theartistcraig is an illustrator and writer. Currently completing his Bachelor of Arts at the University of South Africa

Although Craig has explored other mediums and formats, his first love has always been sequential art. He believes wholeheartedly in the medium's transformative power and rebellious spirit, it's ability to be contemporary while not conforming. He primarily works in ink and respects the traditional process, but has used digital format quite effectively as well. He is known to push the boundaries regarding detail and is always testing the limits of what interior page art can be.

His first short graphic novel “Thomas Crane and the Mind Machine” has become a cult classic and best seller at every Comic Con he has attended, a place you will always find him. Craig explores Lovecraftian lore in his stories and art, always bringing themes of horror and mortality into his work.



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